DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF MEMBERS IN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

BY

THOMAS WHITNEY GANDY

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The Problem

The study dealt with the duties and responsibilities performed by white staff members in agricultural education in colleges and universities in the Unted States. The purposes of the study were:

1. to describe the professional status of staff members in agricultural education in colleges and universities according to their special assignments,
2. to define and clarify the duties and responsibilities of the specialists in teacher educaton,
3. to determine the percentages of time spent by staff members in several areas of teacher education programs, and
4. to secure from each staff member the changes he plans to make and the changes he believes should be made in teacher education programs in the near future.

Need for the Study

Teacher education programs in agricultural education have grown in number and complexity since their beginning. New duties and responsibilities were assigned to individual staff members. Since the end of World War II, many new staff members have been added. In 1946 the number of staff members employed in the United States was 147. In 1951 the number had risen to 211, an increase of 64 members. Possibly the most significant fact for this study, however, was that only 90 staff members employed in 1946 were still employed in 1951. Therefore, the number of new staff members added to teacher education staffs between 1946 and 1951 was 121.

Method of Investigation

Early in the study, an intensive investigation of the operation of two departments of agricultural education was made. The duties and responsibilities of staff members in the two departments were recorded and were divided into ten areas of work. A survey form for personal interviews and for mailing purposes was constructed with the information gathered from the observation of the two departments, discussions with staff members, and the review of related literature. The myriad duties and responsibilities of staff members were "telescoped" or condensed into 77 major duties and responsibilities.

The writer interviewed five staff members from as many states to check on the clarity, quality, and comprehensiveness of the survey form. A revision of the form was then made.

The group invited to participate in the study were the 168 white staff members who were employed as teeacher educators in 1952-1953. Of this number, 34 were interviewed personally, and 118 responded by mail, making a total return of 90.5 per cent.

Due to noticeable differences among the duties of heads of departments, the writer divided that specialty into three groups: (1) heads of large departments, or departments with four or more staff members including the department head, (2) heads of medium-size departments, or departments with two or three staff members including the department head, and (3) heads of small departments, or one-man departments. Four other groups of specialists had sufficient numbers of respondents to use in the summary. They were: (1) resident teacher educators, (2) itinerant teacher educators, (3) farm mechanics specialists, and (4) subject matter specialists.

Summary and Conclusions

Professional Status of Staff Members

The data showed these things concerning the professional

status of staff members:

1. The largest group of respondents held the rank of full professor. Progressively fewer staff members held the next lower ranks. Heads of departments were primarily full professors, and resident teacher educators were associate professors. There were no dominant ranks for the other three groups of specialists.

2. The master's degree was held by 61.2 per cent of the staff members; the doctorate by 36.8 per cent; and the bachelor's degree by 2.0 per cent. About half of the heads of departments and resident teacher educators held doctorates. The doctorate was held by a minority of the other specialists. The percentage holding the bachelor's degree only in 1922-1923 was 41.5, while in 1952-1953 it was 2.0 per cent. The percentage holding the doctorate had risen.

3. The median number of years of service as teacher educators for all staff members was seven. The median number of years of tenure was also seven. Heads of large and medium-size departments had medians of experience of 15.5 and 17.0 years, respectively, and all other specialists had medians of 7.0 years of experience or less. The wide disparity of medians of experience as teacher educators probably was due to the influence of World War II. Heads of departments were older men, usually, and had been teacher educators since before the war, whereas the other specialties were filled either with younger men employed since the war or with men who had long experience as teachers of vocational agriculture.

4. Only one of the 152 respondents had not had experience as a teacher of vocational agriculture. The median years of such experience for all staff members was 8.0.

5. Sixty-seven of the 152 respondents had been supervising teachers. Over one-half of these 67 staff members with experience as supervising teachers were employed as teacher educators in the last six years.

6. The typical staff member works full time in agricultural education for 12 months per year with four weeks off for vacation.

Duties and Responsibilities Performed by Staff Members

The duties and responsibilities performed by one or more staff members in one-half or more of the 55 departments involved in the study are listed:

1. Providing instruction for students.
   a. Teaching courses and duties related to teaching courses:
      (1) Prepare course outlines and teaching plans for courses.
      (2) Prepare source units for courses.
      (3) Prepare charts, graphs, models, and other visual aids for courses.
      (4) Secure materials and supplies for courses.
      (5) Prepare examinations and written assisnments.
      (6) Grade papers and examinations.
      (7) Provide conferences with individual students regarding course work.
      (8) Evaluate progress of students.
   b. Supervising student teaching:
      (1) Select student teaching centers.
      (2) Assist in selecting supervising teachers or critic teachers for the student teaching centers.
      (3) Assist in training supervising teachers for their additional responsibility.
      (4) Arrange assignment of student teachers to centers.
      (5) Assist in planning participating experiences of student teachers.
      (6) Supervise student teaching.
      (7) Provide opportunity for trainees to observe good teaching outside the student teaching program, either before or after.
      (8) Provide summer experiences for student teachers.
      (9) Co-ordinate student teaching experiences, observation, and if available, summer practice.

2. Preparing visual aids and instructional materials:
   a. Prepare visual aids for teachers in the field.
   b. Prepare instructional materials for teachers in the field.

3. Working with students other than in connection with classes:
   a. Sponsor one or more college student organizations.
   b. Recruit and select prospective teachers of vocational agriculture.
   c. Secure student personal data record from agricultural education students.
   d. Keep cumulative records of all undergraduate students in agricultural education.
   e. Keep cumulative records of all graduate students in agricultural education.
   f. Counsel students concerning problems other than those taken up in conferences regarding course work.

4. Directing and conducting research:
   a. Assist degree candidates in their research studies.
   b. Locate phases of the agricultural education program which need study and clarification.
   c. Conduct systematic research in those phases of the program needing study and clarification.
   d. Interpret research studies for the staff and for teachers in the field.
   e. Assist in making agricultural education surveys in public school districts.
   f. Assist in making general education surveys and in research undertaken by public school officials and lay people.
   g. Secure financial support for research.

5. Improving professionally:
   a. Write professional materials for publication other than connected with course work.
   b. Read professional materials other than for courses.

6. Performing office and clerical work:
   a. Keep financial records for the department.
   b. Keep records necessary for making reports to the state office and to the institution.
   c. Perform necessary clerical duties such as answering correspondence.
   d. Secure secretarial assistance.
   e. Delegate work for secretaries.

7. Attending and participating in professional meetings and developing better working relationships:
   a. Conduct staff meetings and staff discussions.
   b. Work with vocational agriculture teachers' conferences.
   c. Assist with short courses for teachers of vocational agriculture.
   d. Give demonstrations during short courses and teachers' conferences.
   e. Work with vocational agriculture teachers in planning programs of vocational agriculture.
   f. Work with school administrators in planning programs of vocational agriculture.
   g. Work with school boards in planning programs of vocational agriculture.
   h. Work with advisory councils in palnning programs of vocational agriculture .
   i. Serve as a consultant, or otherwise, in public school teachers' meetings, other than vocational agriculture.
   j. Assist with high school F.F.A. activities, such as judging exhibits and contests.

8. Performing administrative duties:
   a. Plan an improved training program for undergraduates in agricultural education.
   b. Plan an improved training program for graduates, including in-service education.
   c. Determine teaching facilities and equipment needed.
   d. Organize and maintain facilities and equipment.
   e. Secure materials and supplies for the department.

f. Assist the administrative officers of the institution in formulating policies for the department.
g. Assist the agricultural education staff members in formulating departmental policies.
h. Execute departmental policies.
i. Coordinate the activities of the department.
j. Delegate teaching duties and responsibilities.
k. Present to the administrative officials of the institution the needs of the department.
l. Prepare a budget for the department.
m. Secure funds for the department.
n. Make departmental reports to the state office.
o. Make departmental reports to the institution.
p. Assist in formulating the state plan.
q. Recommend teachers of vocational agriculture for suitable positions.
r. Evaluate the agricultural education program continuously to improve quality and efficiency.

9. Supervising teachers in the field:
a. None.

10. Providing itinerant teacher education or in-service education:
a. Plan and arrange off-campus courses (extension or extra-mural courses).
b. Prepare materials for off-campus courses.
c. Teach off-campus courses.
d. Plan and arrange in-service education for first year teachers.
e. Conduct in-service education for first year teachers.
f. Plan and arrange for in-service education of other teachers in the field, other than credit courses.
g. Conduct in-service education for teachers in the field other than first year teachers and other than credit courses.

The duties and responsibilities assumed by groups of specialists, the approximate percentages of time that were

spent in performing the duties, and the trends that probably can be expected in the future are as follows:

1. One-half or more of the time of four groups of specialists was devoted to providing instruction for students. These four were heads of medium-size departments, heads of small departments, resident teacher educators, and farm mechanics specialists. One-third of the time of heads of large departments was devoted to providing instruction, as was one-fifth of the time of itinerant teacher educators, and one-tenth of the time of subject matter specialists.

   Heads of small departments and resident teacher educators teach a higher number of courses per year than any other group of specialists. The next highest number of courses taught per year are taught by heads of large and medium-size departments. Farm mechanics specialists teach fewer courses per year than any of these four groups of specialists, though their percentage of time spent in teaching was the highest. This is probably due to the amount of laboratory work there is connected with farm mechanics instruction.

   Heads of departments and resident teacher educators had most responsibility for providing student teaching opportunities. Farm mechanics specialists and subject matter specialists had little responsibility for these duties. Three-fourths of the itinerant teacher educators had responsibility for supervising student teaching in the student teaching conters, but had little responsibility for the other duties in this area of work.

   Providing summer experiences for student teachers was reported by slightly more than one-half of the departments. However, judging by the changes planned and changes desired by staff members, the number of departments which provide summer experiences will rise rapidly within the next few years.

   One-fourth of the changes planned and changes desired were regarding improvements in the instructional programs.

2. Preparation of visual aids and instructional materials was almost exclusively the responsibility of subject matter specialists. Seventy-two per cent of their time was spent in this area. However, many staff members other than subject matter specialists reported that they planned or desired to make changes in their programs of work which would involve preparing more instructional materials for teachers of vocational agriculture.

3. Heads of departments and resident teacher educators had more responsibility for working with students other than in connection with classes than had the other three groups of specialists. However, the percentages for all groups of specialists were 5 per cent or less of the time spent in performing professional duties.

   Since itinerant teacher educators are off campus much of the time and since subject matter specialists have little contact with students, these two groups of specialists had little resposibility in counseling students.

4. In directing and conducting research, heads of large departments had most responsibility; second were heads of medium-size departments; and third were resident teacher educators and itinerant teacher educators. Accoring to the number of changes planned and changes desired concerning research, an increase in the amount of time devoted to research by staff members probably can be expected in the future.

5. Five per cent or less of the time of any group of specialists was spent in improving professionally.

6. Performing office and clerical work was closely associated with performing administrative duties. One of the most common ways of reducing work loads, as reported by staff members, was by employing additional clerical help and graduate assistants.

7. Heads of large departments had spent more of their time than any other group of specialists in attending and participating in professional meetings and developing better

relationships. Farm mechanics specialists and itinerant teacher educators had spent the second and third highest percentages of time.

Responsibility for assisting with high school F.F.A. activities, such as judging exhibits and contests, was reported by one-half or more of the resident teacher educators, heads of medium-size and small departments, and farm mechanics specialists. It may be necessary, in some instances at least, for the heads of small departments to assume responsibility for this duty. However, for the other three groups of specialists, assisting with high school F.F.A. is possibly one of the duties which could be eliminated from the activities of many staff members.

Staff members normally attend the following meetings: (1) state association of vocational agriculture teachers, (2) state vocational education association, (3) regional agricultural education conference, (4) state education association, and (5) state district or area associations of vocational agriculture teachers.

Joint staff meetings of teacher education and supervisory staffs were irregularly scheduled by more than one-half of the staffs. Monthly and quarterly meetings apppeared to be held more regularly than other meeting schedules reported.

Nine staff members reported desired changes in participation in departmental staff meetings and in joint staff meetings. They were concerned over the lack of or irregularity of staff meetings.

8. Performing administrative duties was primarily a function of heads of departments. Department size had much to do with the amount of time and responsibility required for the performance of these duties; the larger the department, the more time and responsibility was required.

Possibly due to the fact that they are in the agricultural education offices more than are the itinerant teacher edu-

cators, farm mechanics specialists, and subject matter specialists, the resident teacher educators have more responsibility in performing administrative duties.

9. Supervising teachers of vocational agriculture is not a duty of teacher educators.

10. Itinerant teacher education duties are assumed largely by itinerant teacher educators. Duties requiring administrative decisions are performed by heads of departments rather than by itinerant teacher educators, whereas duties involving field work are assigned to the itinerant teacher educators.

    A rapid increase in itinerant teacher education will probably result from the planned changes reported by the staff members. More changes in this area of work were reported by resident teacher educators than by any other group of specialists.

The changes reported by staff members, both planned and desired changes, were largely in increasing itinerant teacher education, producing visual aids and instructional materials, doing more research, and making improvements in the instructional programs, including improvements in the participatory experiences of student teachers.

Changes reported which tend to decrease work loads were: (1) redefine and redistribute the responsibilities of staff members, (2) improve efficiency in planning, organizing, and coordinating activities of the program, (3) add new staff members both full and part-time as the need arises, (4) employ and use more efficiently clerical assistance, (5) employ and use more efficiently the services of graduate assistants, (6) make changes in the undergraduate and graduate programs, (7) improve facilities, equipment, and arrangement, (8) reduce committee assignments, (9) reduce time spent in professional meetings and conferences, (10) simplify office routine and record keeping, (11) perform fewer duties in connection with the high school F.F.A., (12) make use of

student assistance in the preparation of materials, (13) make changes in procedure in teacher placement, (14) quit teaching courses in general education, and (15) evaluate the total program being offered by the staff, so that if there are items of little value, they can be eliminated.

General Conclusions

A few conclusions of a more general nature are as follows:

1. Expressions common in agricultural education and professional terminology assumed to be understood by all staff members were not understood.
2. Staff members who reported that they were specialists in one area of work often had duties which were not similar to other staff members in that specialty.
3. The changes reported by staff members indicate that the duties and responsibilities which they want to perform in the future are quite different from what they now have.
4. In order to make a proper and reasonable division of duties and responsibilities in the teacher education program, it is necessary for the staff to have a thorough knowledge of the numerous, varied, and time-consuming duties and responsibilities in such a program. A composite list of the activities to be performed by staff members lends itself to staff planning and evaluating and serves as a guide and prompter in promoting better programs in the future.

   However, even with a composite list of activities, the exact number of duties and responsibilities which a staff member should accept or be expected to accept cannot be determined by a study such as the writer has conducted. There are several reasons for this: (1) The duties and responsibilities of one state program, though stated in approximately the same words as another state program, may be entirely different in their demands on the time and professional competence of the staff member involved; (2) The ability of each staff member to organize and carry out

activities would be involved, with no way to measure accurately that ability; (3) The local facilities, equipment, space, supplies, materials, and finances will definitely affect the distribution of work loads; (4) Assistance from secretaries and graduate assistants would have to be measured; and (5) The ability of the staff as a whole to co-ordinate its activities would be a factor.

5. Judging by the data reported, some staff members may not know all the duties that other staff members in their departments are performing.

Recommendations

1. Each staff should make an effort to determine the duties and responsibilities being performed in the department for the purpose of evaluating, planning, organizing, co-ordinathing and improving in every way the teacher education program. Some duties and responsibilities need to be emphasized; some need to be eliminated.

2. Each staff member should have a clear conception of what he is expected to do or what he plans to do.

3. Departmental staff meetings are needed in many situations. The data show that the majority of staff members have a common lack of time in which to think about fundamental problems of why and what to teach. The pressure of unnumbered details involved in their everyday routine leaves too little time, energy, or enthusiasm for planning. Regularly scheduled staff meetings afford at least a partial answer to this problem. However, merely meeting is not enough. The meetings will have to be conducted and the agenda selected democratically. Autocratic methods used in conducting staff meetings would defeat the purpose of the meetings.

4. Joint staff meetings of teacher education and supervisory staffs should be scheduled regularly. A minimum of one meeting per month of three to six hours duration seems

desirable. If itinerant teacher education is increased in proportion to the number of changes reported in that area of work, co-ordination of the activities of supervisors and itinerant teacher educators will be a necessity.

5. Specialization in one or two areas of work would enable a staff member to organize his work more efficiently and enable him to make plans for longer periods of time, thus providing more continuity to each phase of the program. Several staff members were uncertain what they were to do from one semester to the next.

6. Staff members should recognize their responsibilities to their institutions, colleges or schools or divisions, and departments. Proper working relationships depend upon co-operation among staff members of all departments within an institution. Staff members should co-operate more closely with the staff members of other departments to facilitate improvement of the teacher education program.

Need for Further Study

1. Many staff members reported duties and responsibilities which might be interpreted as "fringe" responsibilities, or responsibilities which could be eliminated from the teacher education program. A study of these duties and responsibilities for the purpose of evaluating them might prove beneficial in alleviating certain conditions in which overloads exist.

2. No effort was made in this study to determine the amount of involvement of staff members in civic club responsibilities, community organizations, and other social and fraternal organizations. Work loads are influenced by these responsibilities, plus responsibilities for home conditions, public appearances either official or unofficial, and the physical condition of the staff member. A study of the unofficial responsibilities and conditions confronting the staff member might be helpful in determining work loads.

3. After finishing the study, the writer has decided that a time study kept by each staff member would be beneficial to that staff member. If kept accurately, it would show the staff member which duties were receiving an undue amount of time and effort and the duties which were not receiving enough attention. A time study would serve as a self-examining guide.

4. A study of existing poilcies in each department seems to be needed. It is possible that few departments have written policies and that staff members are not aware of all the unwritten ones. Such a study should include the method in which policies were made and who was responsible for making them.

VITA

Thomas Whitney Gandy was born on October 18, 1919, at Foley, Alabama. He attended elementary and secondary schools in Jefferson and Chilton counties in Alabama, and completed his high school work at the Martha Berry School for Boys in Mount Berry, Georgia, in January, 1939. He completed requirements for the Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture in May, 1942, at Berry College. He served in the U.S. Navy from May, 1942, through December, 1945.

He taught vocational agriculture at Cold Springs High School, Cullman, Alabama, before entering Alabama Polytechnic Institute in September, 1946. He completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Education in June, 1947. He was teacher of vocational agriculture at Beauregard High School, Opelika, Alabama, from July, 1947, through May, 1950. He was supervising teacher for student teaching during the same period.

He entered the Graduate School of Alabama Polytechnic Institute in March, 1948, and was awarded the Master of Science degree in Agricultural Education in August, 1950.

In June, 1950, he joined the faculty of Alabama Polytechnic Institute as instructor in Agricultural Education. He entered the Graduate College of the University of Illinois in February, 1951. He served as a research assistant in Agricultural Education during 1951-1952 school year.

He is now assistant professor of Agricultural Education at Alabama Polytechnic Institute.